

National Park Service  
Santa Monica Mountains  
National Recreation Area



# SOLSTICE CANYON



*Solstice Canyon—a place where nature greets you with the sights and sounds of a babbling brook set amidst towering alder and sycamore trees. Green leaves surround you like a giant cocoon, even in hot, dry summers, filling you with a sense of peace and solitude.*

The solitude, serenity, and abundant natural resources have attracted people to Solstice Canyon for centuries. The Chumash historically used the land for food, water and shelter. Ranchers grazed cattle in the area for many years. Around 1865, Matthew Keller built a stone cottage, which is still visible from Solstice Canyon Trail. The cottage is believed to be the oldest existing stone building in Malibu.

Another home was built on the property in 1952. Renowned African-American architect Paul Williams designed the house for property owners Fred and Florence Roberts. The house was later featured in an issue of *Architectural Digest* for its stunning blend of natural features within the design, including waterfalls, creeks and trees. Today, you can see a small part of the past in the horseshoes and colorful pieces of glass glittering in the walkways at Tropical Terrace, near the building's foundations.

Other evidence of human interaction with the land includes two tall tan buildings on the hillside, which stand as landmarks to another era. Space Technology Laboratories, Inc., a subsidiary of *Thompson-Ramo-Wooldridge* (TRW), rented 10 acres from the Roberts Family from 1961-1973. The site was used to test satellite equipment for space missions, including the *Pioneer 12*. Solstice Canyon was one of only three places in the world chosen to conduct such tests, due to the lack of man-made or natural disturbances.

Today, Solstice Canyon still serves as a haven from city life. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy first opened Solstice Canyon as a public park in 1988. It is now managed by the National Park Service.

Visit Solstice Canyon, where the old meets the new. Help us to preserve and protect its serenity and beauty for all to enjoy.



National Park Service  
Santa Monica Mountains  
National Recreation Area  
401 West Hillcrest Drive  
Thousand Oaks CA 91360

Visitor Center 805-370-2301  
In emergency: dial 911

## Information & Safety

**Be prepared:** Take water, food, and first aid supplies when hiking, biking, or horseback riding.

**Natural and cultural features** are protected and may not be collected.

**Dogs** must be on a leash at all times. For the health and consideration of others, please clean up after your pet.

**Firearms** are not allowed on public lands in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

**Hikers** must yield to horseback riders. **Bicyclists** must ride courteously and yield to hikers and horseback riders.

**Fire** is a constant danger. Open fires are prohibited. Smoking is not permitted while traveling on trails.

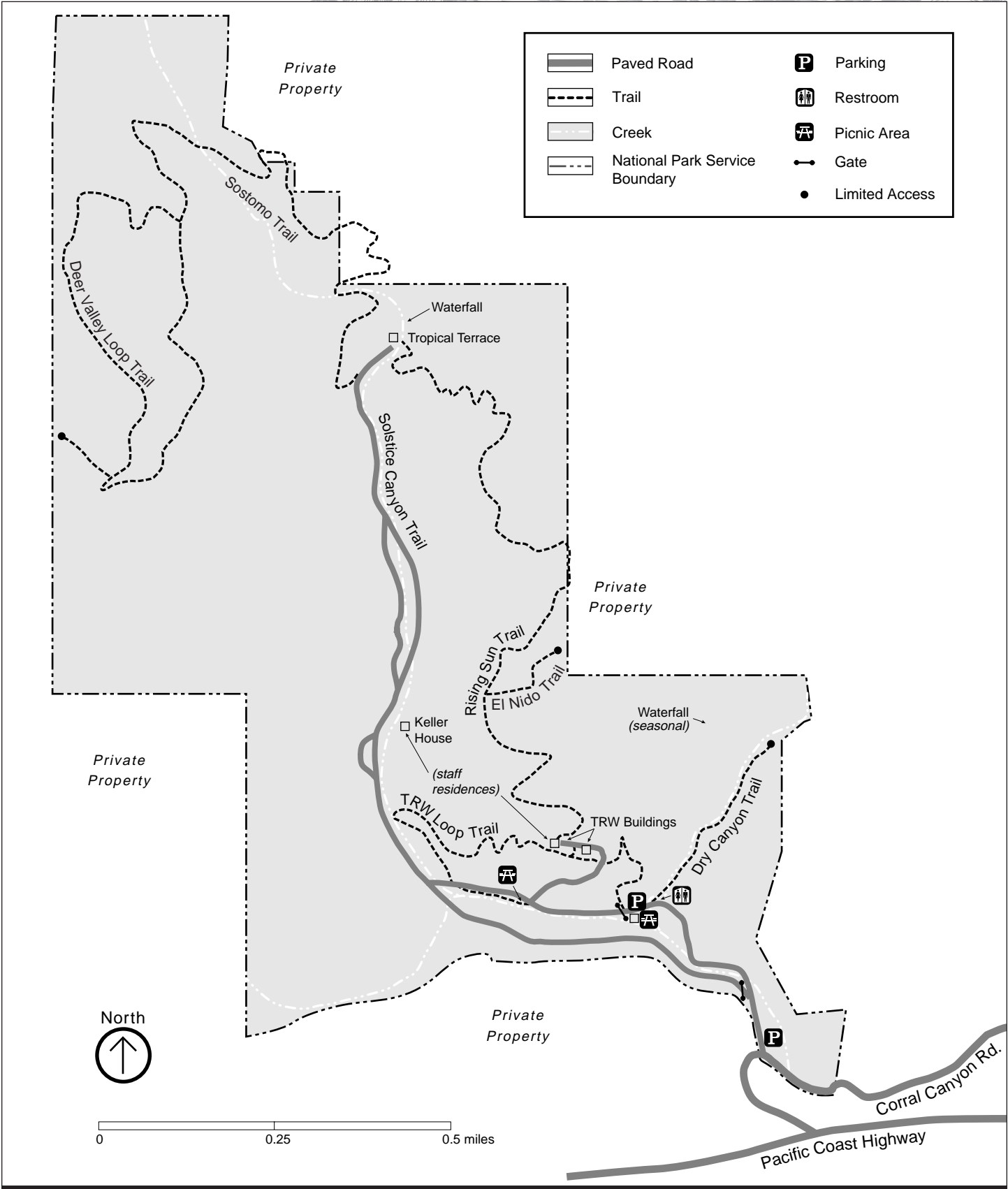
**Trail closures** will be in effect during and following significant rainfall to protect park resources. Trails will be reopened when dry enough to sustain public use.

**Stay on established trails** and off of private property.

Learn to recognize and be alert for **ticks**, **bees**, **rattlesnakes**, and **poison oak**.

**Water** from streams and ponds is not safe to drink due to possible contamination or the presence of the giardia protozoan. Swimming is not permitted.

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## Trails

- Dry Canyon Trail** 1.2 miles round trip, easy—Don't let the name fool you—this canyon isn't always dry. Walk through woodlands next to an intermittent stream. Look for signs of wildlife, including deer, quail and bobcat. At the end of the trail, winter rains bring a 150-foot waterfall to life.
- TRW Loop Trail** 1.5 miles round trip, easy—Begin at the trailhead across from the bulletin board. Continue past the TRW Buildings, through chaparral and an oak woodland. Cross Solstice Canyon Trail by the bridge to connect with the southern portion of the loop. From the picnic area, the trail follows the road back to the parking lot.
- Solstice Canyon Trail** 2.1 miles round trip, easy—Stroll down Solstice Canyon Trail and look for the

Keller House, believed to be the oldest existing stone building in Malibu. On your way to Tropical Terrace, see if you can spy the low concrete retaining walls of a former fish pond in a grassy area overlooking the creek. Many other clues to the past remain even though the Roberts' Family home, once located at Tropical Terrace, burned in 1982. Look for house foundations and a concrete bomb shelter. Walk across the creek into a hidden sanctuary and garden. It's hard to imagine now, but at one time giraffes, camels, buffalo, African deer and exotic birds roamed the canyon on the Roberts' Ranch.

**Rising Sun Trail** 1.5 miles, moderate—This trail is believed to be named after the Rising Sun Vineyard, a winery established by Matthew Keller.

Consider hiking the trail as a loop in conjunction with Solstice Canyon Trail for a variety of scenery from canyon floor to ridgeline. Look for a postcard-perfect view of the ocean framed by the canyon walls at the TRW Buildings.

**Sostomo Trail/Deer Valley Loop** 3.9 miles, moderate to strenuous—Locate the trailhead off of Solstice Canyon Trail, southwest of Tropical Terrace. Hike through chaparral and coastal sage scrub to the west ridge of Solstice Canyon to see some of the best ocean views in the Santa Monica Mountains. Look for "Deer Valley," an area near an oak woodland and meadow known for its abundance of wildlife.

*Note: Bicyclists are limited to the paved areas only.*